

TRICARE Europe

Release

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Command Sponsorship Required for Overseas Active Duty Family Member TRICARE Prime Enrollment

Due to differing interpretations regarding the enrollment of active duty family members (ADFM)s into TRICARE Overseas Prime programs, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, Dr. William Winkenwerder, recently provided clarification to the existing overseas enrollment policy. Only ADFMs who meet the Joint Federal Travel Regulation (JFTR) definition of Command Sponsorship shall be eligible for enrollment into TRICARE Overseas Prime programs.

JFTR defines Command Sponsored as: "Dependent(s) residing with a member at an overseas location in which an accompanied-by-dependents tour is authorized, the member is authorized to serve that tour, and who is authorized by the appropriate authority to be at the member's permanent duty station. The member is authorized to receive station allowances at the with-dependents rate on behalf of command-sponsored dependent(s) as a result of the dependents' residence in the vicinity of the member's permanent duty station." This simply means that the service member's command must officially authorize the family members to reside with the service member at the overseas location for TRICARE Prime enrollment. Because of this authorization, the service member receives certain financial allowances to support his family at the overseas location. Official Command Sponsorship is routinely annotated on a service member's orders.

This new policy is currently being implemented throughout TRICARE Europe. Active duty service members must now provide copies of orders which show Command Sponsorship of their accompanying ADFMs to be enrolled into TRICARE Overseas Prime programs. “Active duty family members who choose to reside overseas but are not Command Sponsored remain eligible for TRICARE Standard, TRICARE Plus, or space-available care at military Medical Treatment Facilities when and where it is available,” said Navy CAPT Mary Greenwood, TRICARE Area Office-Europe’s Program Operations Director. She emphasized the need for military families to understand the new policy before making a decision that could result in costly out-of-pocket expenses for healthcare. TRICARE Standard requires payment of an annual deductible and then co-payments and cost shares for outpatient and inpatient care. “More importantly, bringing Non-Command Sponsored family members who have special medical needs to an overseas location that cannot support those needs puts that individual’s health at unnecessary risk,” CAPT Greenwood added.

Dr. Winkewerder’s policy clarification memorandum also provides guidance regarding exceptions to the policy, under certain circumstances. The memorandum can be accessed online at: http://www.ha.osd.mil/policies/2005/97-052_clarification.pdf

Please see your Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinator (BCAC) at your local TRICARE Service Center if you need further assistance and guidance.

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Editor’s Note: *You can find the number for your local TRICARE Service Center at www.europe.tricare.osd.mil/benefit/tsclist.asp. You can also call your local military Medical Treatment Facility or the Centralized TRICARE Service Center at 00-49-(0) 6302-67-7433 to find your servicing TSC number.*